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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ROME 003676

SIPDIS

STATE FOR IO/EDA HAYMOND AND JOHNSON, EB/KLEMM AND HAUSER
STATE PASS TO USDA FAS WASHDC
OES/ETC FOR DRISCOLL AND FOSTER
USDA FOR FAS/HUGUES, APHIS DUNAHAY
USAID FOR JOSETTE LEWIS
FROM FODAG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/24/2007
CONFIDENTIAL

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TAGS: [AORC](#) [ETRD](#) [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [ETRD](#) [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [MZ](#) [FAO](#) [WFP](#) [MZAORC](#) [FAO](#) [WFP](#)
SUBJECT: FAO RESPONSE TO DEMARCHE ON GMO FOOD AID
REF: A) STATE 139519

B) MAPUTO 1408

CLASSIFIED BY: ALTERNATE PERM REP, LUCY TAMLYN FOR REASONS
1.5 B AND D

11. (C) SUMMARY. FAO DIRECTOR GENERAL DIOUF IS EXPECTED TO SEND A LETTER TO UN UNDERSECRETARY OSHIMA CORRECTING HIS PREVIOUS CORRESPONDENCE AND STATING THAT THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL DOES NOT STIPULATE MILLING OF GM COMMODITIES TO PREVENT PLANTING. COPIES OF THE CORRESPONDENCE SHOULD BE SENT TO SOUTHERN AFRICAN FAO REPS AS WELL. WHILE FAO RECOGNIZES THAT IT MADE A FACTUAL ERROR IN THE ORIGINAL CORRESPONDENCE, THE PRIMARY FAO CONCERN (AS EXPRESSED BY FAO DEPUTY HARCHARIK) IS THAT IT IS BEING "UNFAIRLY SCAPEGOATED" IN THIS MATTER. END SUMMARY.

12. (U) ALTERNATE PERM REP AND HUMANITARIAN ATTACHE DISCUSSED REFTEL (A) DEMARCHE WITH THE FAO'S DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL, DAVID HARCHARIK, ON MONDAY JULY 22. WE NOTED THAT THE FAO WAS APPARENTLY PROVIDING INCORRECT RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON A MISUNDERSTANDING OF THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL AND THAT THIS COULD POTENTIALLY HAVE DISASTROUS IMPLICATIONS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. HARCHARIK WAS NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE MATTER BUT PROMISED TO LOOK INTO IT IMMEDIATELY.

THE FAO RESPONSE

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13. (C) ALTERNATE PERM REP FOLLOWED-UP WITH HARCHARIK BY PHONE ON 7/23, 7/24 AND 7/25. AS OF THE LAST CONVERSATION, THE SITUATION IS AS FOLLOWS:

-- THE FAO RECOGNIZES THAT THE LETTER TO UN UNDERSECRETARY OSHIMA WAS INCORRECT.

-- A NEW LETTER WILL BE TRANSMITTED SHORTLY TO UNDERSECRETARY OSHIMA. WE UNDERSTAND THE LETTER WILL SAY, IN REFERENCE TO THE FAO'S PREVIOUS LETTER, THAT THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL DOES NOT STIPULATE MILLING OR ADVANCE INFORMED AGREEMENT (AIA) FOR FOOD OR FEED. HOWEVER, (PER HARCHARIK), THE LETTER WILL NOT SAY THAT "GMO'S ARE SAFE" OR "NOT SAFE" BUT WILL REFER TO THE PREVIOUS LETTER'S STATEMENT THAT THE "PREVAILING SCIENTIFIC OPINION IS THAT THEY ARE AS SAFE AS THEIR CONVENTIONAL COUNTERPARTS." THE LETTER MAY GO OUT LATE TODAY OR TOMORROW (FRIDAY 7/26).

-- A COPY OF THE LETTER SHOULD BE SENT TO THE FAO COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVES.

-- ALTHOUGH EXPLICITLY ASKED, HARCHARIK WOULD NOT AGREE TO SHARE THE NEW LETTER WITH THE MISSION SO WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT THE EXACT CONTENTS WILL BE. HARCHARIK STATED THAT THE LETTER HAS BEEN DELAYED IN PART BECAUSE "DIRECTOR GENERAL (DG) DIOUF WANTS TO ADD SOME OTHER THINGS." (THE DG IS CURRENTLY IN SENEGAL.)

THE FAO GRIPE

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14. (C) HARCHARIK'S BIGGEST CONCERN, HOWEVER, WAS THAT THE FAO WAS BEING "SCAPEGOATED" IN THIS AFFAIR. HARCHARIK NOTED THAT THE ORIGINAL REQUEST FROM OSHIMA WAS FOR UN AGENCY INPUT IN ORDER TO DEVELOP A COMMON UN POLICY. IN FACT, NO UN POLICY HAD EMERGED FROM OSHIMA, AND, ACCORDING TO HARCHARIK, "LEAKED FAO LETTERS" WERE BEING USED TO "UNFAIRLY IDENTIFY FAO AS THE CULPRIT."

FAO IN THE FIELD (MAPUTO)

15. (C) ALTERNATE PERM REP RESPONDED THAT THE REAL PROBLEM WAS NOT WHAT HAD HAPPENED IN NEW YORK, BUT WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN THE FIELD, AND PARTICULARLY THE ROLE OF THE FAO REPRESENTATIVES AND THE ADVICE THAT THEY WERE PROVIDING TO GOVERNMENTS. IN THIS CONNECTION HARCHARIK MENTIONED THAT HE HAD BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE FAO REP IN MAPUTO, MR. PETER VANDOR, WHO APPARENTLY "WANTED TO KNOW WHAT HE WAS TO SAY." HARCHARIK REPORTED THAT HE HAD TOLD VANDOR TO "HOLD OFF," BUT ADDED THAT VANDOR HAD ASSURED HIM THAT:

- 1) THERE WAS SUFFICIENT MILLING CAPACITY IN MOZAMBIQUE AND
- 2) THAT WFP HAD "DEFERRED" TO THE FAO IN THIS MATTER IN

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ACTION IO-00

INFO LOG-00 AF-00 AGRE-00 AID-00 COME-00 CTME-00 SRPP-00
EB-00 EUR-00 E-00 TEDE-00 NSCE-00 OES-01 OIC-02
OMB-01 SSO-00 SS-00 STR-00 TRSE-00 USIE-00 SAS-00
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R 251357Z JUL 02
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5091
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY HARARE
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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MAPUTO.

WFP ACTION

16. (C) HUMANITARIAN ATTACHE TIM LAVELLE SPOKE 7/25 WITH THE WFP'S REGIONAL OFFICER IN JOHANNESBURG (JUDITH LEWIS) WHO WAS AWARE OF FAO MOZAMBIQUE COUNTRY DIRECTOR PETER VANDOR'S HIGH VISIBILITY ON THE GM MAIZE ISSUE. LAVELLE QUOTED TO LEWIS THE WFP'S JUNE 28 LETTER TO OSHIMA ON THIS MATTER WHICH STATED "THE UN SHOULD NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES PROMOTE THE IDEA THAT ALL GM COMMODITIES IMPORTED EITHER COMMERCIALLY OR AS FOOD AID NEED TO BE MILLED. MILLING SHOULD BE TREATED ONLY AS AN OPTION FOR GOVERNMENTS WHICH PLACE RESTRICTIONS ON GM FOOD IMPORTS."

17. (C) HUMANITARIAN ATTACHE SUGGESTED THAT THE WFP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JAMES MORRIS CALL FAO DG DIOUF AND RECOMMEND THAT FAO OFFICERS THROUGH SOUTHERN AFRICA ADOPT A "MUTED" STANCE ON GM MATTERS.

COMMENT

18. (C) FODAG BELIEVES THAT THE UN NEEDS TO BE SPEAKING WITH ONE VOICE ON FOOD AID ISSUES IN THE REGION -- THROUGH THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM. IN THIS REGARD WE NOTE THAT THE UNSYG ANNAN APPOINTED ON JULY 23 WFP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MORRIS AS HIS SPECIAL ENVOY ON THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN AFRICA.

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